



Public Meeting
Grand Calumet River – West Branch
Hammond Public Library, 564 State Street
Wednesday, February 5, 2003
6:30 p.m.

Agenda and Summary

1. Introduction, overview of previous West Branch meetings

T.J. Holsen of the Delta Institute provided a summary of previous West Branch meetings sponsored by the GCRRF Council and outlined the Council's work to date (see previous meeting summaries).

All GCRRF Council reports and documents are now available on the internet at: www.in.gov/idem/land/federal/nrda/grandcalumet/index.html

A fact sheet summarizing the results of the Roxana Marsh sampling and analysis was handed out to meeting attendees.

2. NIPSCO clean-up plans for West Branch site

Brian Stage and Dan Sullivan, NiSource, and Mark McCabe, a consultant for NIPSCO, gave a presentation on clean-up plans for the former manufactured gas site on the West Branch. See attached presentation. Pertinent details are as follows:

- a. The site investigation shows the site is impacted by PAHs in the surface soil, PAHs and VOCs in subsurface soil and groundwater, and coal tars downgradient of the gas holders.
- b. The risk assessment done for the land shows no complete risk pathways for groundwater or subsurface soil, but shows on-site workers at risk for exposure to surface soils.
- c. For the River, the sediment poses potential risks to benthic organisms (and would also to any humans if there was use).
- d. The clean-up goals are to eliminate surface soil risk to on-site workers, restore habitat to the benthic community, contain migration of coal tar, and minimize disruption to the community due to odors from tars, methane and hydrogen sulfide.
- e. For the site, they will install a retaining wall to prevent flow to the River, and a groundwater cutoff wall on the Wilcox Street side of the site to divert groundwater around the impacted area, then add fill to the site to cover the impacted surface soils, and plant willows to uptake and draw down site groundwater
- f. For the River, sheet pile dams will be installed at Hohman and the downstream RR bridge to divert and dry out the River, then the top 2 feet of impacted sediment will be removed. A liner will be installed, covered with clean fill and armored.
- g. During these activities on the site, monitoring will occur hourly and daily based on action levels for key parameters established in conjunction with IDEM. If an

action level is exceeded, then additional controls (to be developed) will be implemented.

- h. They hope to get the project going in 2003.

Questions on NIPSCO Presentation

Q: Will the Voluntary Remediation Plan be available for public review?

NIPSCO: Yes, once we have our work plan approved from IDEM.

IDEM: We are currently working out issues with NIPSCO. After our Technical Approval it will be available for public review.

Q: To prevent problems from odors and other air problems related to the project, will you find out who in the community might have asthma and other respiratory problems?

NIPSCO: We'll be working very closely with the senior housing that is nearby the project site to monitor any complaints or issues.

Q: Will you have any air monitoring?

NIPSCO: Yes, several monitoring stations are planned around the site. We've set action levels which will trigger responses on our part. We'll do daily monitoring, and develop a mechanism to get monitoring information out to the public on a weekly basis.

Q: Why not take out all the sediments, rather than cap those that will be left in the river?

NIPSCO: We strongly agree with the agencies regarding their goal of restoring the beneficial uses of the river, ecologically and health-wise. We believe that the plan of partial removal followed by placement of a cap achieves that goal. A more extensive removal does not add to that, but would make this a longer project, possibly introducing odor or exposure issues.

Q: Have you considered doing this in winter, when odors would be lessened?

NIPSCO: Yes, we're looking into that.

Q: What percentage will be capped vs. remaining behind?

NIPSCO: More will be left behind.

3. Update on GCRRF Council's current and planned activities

GCRRF Council members Mike Mikulka, USEPA, and Jim Smith, IDEM, reported that sampling on the West Branch, as outlined in the Field Sampling and Analysis Plan report, had been completed and analysis of those samples was completed and undergoing data validation. Sediment toxicity initial data was back, and fish tissue results are expected in April 2003. The only item on hold was the invertebrate testing. By late spring 2003, everything should be complete and results available to the public. Another meeting will be held at that time, to discuss sampling results and begin exploration of restoration alternatives.

The Council has contacted the cities of Hammond and East Chicago, and hopes to meet with the cities to describe what's been done to date, outline next steps, and solicit any issues or concerns the cities might have.

The Council has scheduled a meeting in March with USEPA's Great Lakes National Program Office to talk about the Great Lakes Legacy Act, which provides \$50 million per year over 5 years for sediment remediation in Areas of Concern. The Council hopes to get a remedial plan in place so that these remediation monies would be available on the West Branch.

General Questions and Comments

Q: Currently the river seems nearly dead, although there is some life (carp, turtles, beaver, etc). Could the river become marginally usable through restoration?

GCRRF Council: Some life and biodiversity will return. Whether the river will be deep enough for recreation and boating is unknown. The Council's goal is to attain the "beneficial uses" of the river, as spelled out in the Remedial Action Plan. If these beneficial uses were attained, fish from the river could be eaten safely, people could swim in the river, etc. Achieving these types of uses of the river is the ultimate goal of clean-up and restoration.

Q: Are there zebra mussels present in the river?

CGRRF Council: There hasn't been any evidence of zebra mussels.

Q: Does the Council hope to clean the sediments down to the native material?

GCRRF Council: There are two important questions we need to answer. One, what does the public want with regard to clean-up and restoration? Two, what activities are within the scope of the funding and resources we have available? We'll look at all the possible alternatives, starting with "no action" as a baseline, and assess the human health risks and ecological risks of those scenarios. We'll consider dredging, dredging & capping, in situ treatment, and all the other possibilities, including phytoremediation. Nothing is off the table yet as far as alternatives. We're open to new technologies and new ideas. The only option we think is limited at this point is capping.

4. Next meeting

Meeting attendees gave the following suggestions for topics for future meetings:

- a. More detail on Hammond Sanitary District's retention basin for combined sewer overflows.
- b. Department of Transportation's work on the bridge at Calumet Avenue.
- c. River clean-up options related to health risk to residents living along the river.
- d. Clean-up plans for the IL portion of the WBGCR.

The next meeting will be scheduled for late spring, when the results of the West Branch sampling are available.